

**UNIVERSIDAD DEL SALVADOR
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS**

DOCTORADO EN LENGUAS MODERNAS

***Globalization
and the
Bastardization of Language***

**Modern Languages
DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

by

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QUOTATIONS

El original no es fiel a la traducción

Jorge Luis Borges

***Without translation, we would inhabit
parishes bordering on silence***

George Steiner



***Thanks to words, we have been able to rise
above the brutes, and thanks to words,
we have sunk to the level of the demons***

Aldous Huxley

***Think like a wise man but communicate
in the language of the people***

William Butler Yeats

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***England and America are two countries
separated by the same language.***

George Bernard Shaw

ABSTRACT

La investigación de esta tesis tiene por objeto provocar la curiosidad de los interesados en seguir la carrera de traductor y/o interprete sobre las nefastas metamorfosis provocadas por la globalización, que conllevan a la bastardización del lenguaje. Los datos históricos y conceptos puntuales desarrollados sobre el lenguaje, la globalización, traducción e interpretación brindan los antecedentes necesarios para comprobar la bastardización provocada por la globalización. Cada Capítulo señala algunos factores inherentes a los fenómenos y efectos de la globalización, y su influencia en la construcción de nuevas modalidades de pensamiento y uso del lenguaje, fustigadas por la incorporación de nuevas herramientas y tecnologías en el cotidiano. También forma parte del estudio la presentación analítica de los diversos idiomas emergentes como resultado de dicha bastardización, reforzada por opiniones expresadas por grandes conocedores del tema. El diagnóstico de la situación actual del lenguaje aporta pruebas fehacientes del efecto dañino de dicha bastardización, mediante la mención de medidas gubernamentales adoptadas para proteger el idioma. Se establecen también las características paradigmáticas de la realidad globalizada, así como sus consecuencias sobre el proceso de modernización. Por medio de ejemplos del postulado teórico defendido a lo largo del texto, se elaboraron pautas, observaciones y comentarios dirigidos al principal interlocutor del tema, con el propósito de ampliar el conocimiento de todo aquel que pretenda asumir el compromiso de convertirse en un buen traductor y/o intérprete.

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PREFACE

Surrounded by a cacophony of sounds since my earliest recollection, I soon discovered how to distinguish which set belonged to each one of the languages spoken around me. As a child-immigrant, I also learned that a series of customs, traditions and identity characteristics –in addition to the usual ones referring to ethnic groups, gender, race, religion, social class, etc. – were also intrinsically bound to each language.

Over the years, I was fortunate enough to learn some of the many languages spoken by my family, and to appreciate their particular strength and weakness in expressing a thought, concept or feeling. It is this knowledge that allows me to perceive that each language has one or more words that are unique in superbly expressing something, making it almost impossible to translate them correctly. One that comes to mind immediately is *saudades* in Portuguese, which, according to the Webster dictionary means longing, yearning, nostalgia, homesickness, heartache, etc. and yet, none of these words convey the same depth of emotion.

Thus, almost without being aware of it at first, I fell in love with words, their correct meaning, *nuances*, subtle hidden essence so difficult to transmit correctly in a different language, a feeling that led me to try creating sounds that could have the same resonance, trigger the same feelings in those who read or heard them.

It is due to my passion for languages and words that I chose to become first a translator, and later a simultaneous interpreter. And it is my pursuit for excellence which I perhaps may never attain, that leads me to investigate further why the changes suffered by languages in today's world differ from the constant metamorphoses they underwent in the past. So much so, that even the disappearance of so many languages throughout the history of our planet, is the antithesis of the vanishing voices of our age.

The vanishing voices that do not refer to the extinction of a language, but rather to the drastic alteration of the peculiarities that distinguish it and make it unique.

The preliminary research carried out strengthened my belief that most of these sweeping changes were due to the current type of globalization that is spreading out with shocking might through the Earth. Among the countless definitions that exist about the type of globalization that appeared in the 20th century, the one that best expresses my own belief is that conveyed by Dr. Nayef Al-Rodhan and Ambassador Gérard Stoudman: *"Globalization is a process that encompasses the causes, course and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities."*¹ No mention is made about its potentially negative or positive effects, as this will obviously depend on the personal opinion of each individual.

Due to my life-long reverence for languages and words, I cannot fail to notice that the changes brought in by globalization are becoming in my opinion more and more drastic and damaging. Furthermore, because of my profession (s), I feel compelled to use the experience acquired while performing them, to support my assertions.

I hope to be able to develop the topic and defense of my belief in such a way as to prompt others to pursue further study on this subject, either to contradict or reinforce the data contained herein.

¹ Al-Rodhan, Nayef R.F. and Ambassador Gérard Stoudman - *Definition of Globalization: A Comprehensive Overview and a Proposed Definition*. Pub. Geneva Center for Security Policy, 2006

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Over the centuries, scholars and thinkers have tried to discover the true origins of human language. Notwithstanding the efforts of experts in the fields of anthropology, neuroscience, genetics, psychology, evolutionary biology, linguistics and artificial intelligence that have shaped our comprehension about language, huge gaps still exist in our understanding of this issue, despite the overwhelming explosion of our scientific knowledge about the universe, as well as everything else we have decided to discover.

Although it is undoubtedly true that language is an important part of what makes us human, we know comparatively little about how this unique ability for language originated and evolved into the complex linguistic systems currently used, even after considering the many language "trees", "charts" and theories developed and supported by many academics.

The strongest point of consensus among researches may be that, in order to fully understand language evolution, the study must be approached simultaneously from many disciplines.² We must understand how our brains work; how language is structured and what it is used for; how early language and modern language differ from each other and from other communication systems; how we manage to acquire language during development, and how learning, culture and evolution interact. And let's not forget the strongly debated issue in language evolution research of whether language originated in manual gestures or evolved exclusively in the vocal domain.³

² Hauser, M.D. et al. (2002) The Faculty of Language: What is it, Who has it, and How did it Evolve? *Science* 298, 1569–1579

³ Corballis, M.C. (2003) From Hand to Mouth: the Gestural Origins of Language. In *Language Evolution* (Christiansen, M.H. and Kirby, S., eds.) Oxford University Press

Perhaps once there really was only one language, one with a limited vocabulary and simple rules for combining words into sentences. Later on, the vocabulary expanded according to whatever needs arose, by combining old words or inventing new ones. Rules were drawn up and became increasingly more detailed. Furthermore, at some point in time vocabulary and grammar also blended, so much so, that today we see all languages appear to have an equal ability to express nuances and complexities of human life.

Determining the advent of globalization is just as difficult a task, and its historical origins are persistently under debate. If it dates back to the development of the Silk Road that started in China; the Islamic Golden Age that resulted in the globalization of crops, trade, knowledge and technology; or the so called *Pax Mongolica* of the twelfth century that witnessed the creation of the first international postal service, as well as the rapid transmission of epidemic diseases as bubonic plague across the newly-unified regions of Central Asia⁴, is still under discussion. This train of thought leads us all the way into what is sometimes called proto-globalization, characterized by the rise of maritime European empires, particularly the Portuguese Empire, the Spanish Empire and later the British Empire and Dutch Empire.⁵

The 19th century witnessed the emergence of globalization in something quite close to its modern form. Industrialization fostered the cheap production of household items using economies of scale, while the rapid growth of the population sustained demand for commodities and manufactured goods. According to John Maynard Keynes⁶ the first phase of "modern globalization" began to break down at the beginning of the 20th century with the First World War.

⁴ Jack Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*, Crown, 2004

⁵ Hopkins, A.G., editor. *Globalization in World History* (W.W. Norton, 2002). 263 pp

⁶ John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, Palgrave Macmillan, Paperback, 472 p., 2007 Edition.

The Need For This Research

Bastardization, Mongrelization or Hybridization?

In today's globalized world, correct grammar and accurate spelling are crucial aspects for preserving national cultures, as grassroots imperatives and even personal preferences blur long-established rules and even outweigh ideological edicts. Inspired by the steady spread of instant worldwide communications chatrooms, messaging, texting and blogs, internet users are forging new tools for new media that respond to or even create equally new needs. But there is a heavy price to be paid for such speed and immediacy: clarity is trampled by haste, depth is supplanted by triviality and reflection is overlaid by overload.

When information is leveled down to the lowest possible denominator, language is the first casualty. As vibrant expressions mirroring long-treasured traditions drift into disuse, vivid cultural mosaics fade into dreary duplications through bastardization, mongrelization or hybridization.

Active efforts are needed to maintain clear boundaries between private and public expressions. At the personal level, individual interactions may be conducted through idiosyncratic interpretations and iterations that reflect equally discrete differences. However, in the public or official spheres ranging from classrooms to courtrooms and newsrooms more formal structures are required, underpinning national cultures, preserving local traditions and ensuring clear comprehension for current and future generations.

Aim of the Thesis

In order to unveil the different steps taken during the research carried out for this thesis, we will start by submitting a brief background on language evolution, oral and written language, oral history or the systematic collection of people's testimony

about their experiences that is neither folklore, gossip, hearsay or rumor but that depends upon human memory and the spoken word, mentioning as well the myriad mutations suffered by language (s), especially throughout the last century.

Using a variety of data, we will buttress our belief that globalization in its modern form has caused a severe metamorphosis, embracing the notion that it has even led to the *bastardization* of language, quite the opposite to the positive or sometimes slightly disruptive but always gradual changes that languages suffered in the past. Furthermore, we aim to show that this has brought to the fore a new, constantly mutating lingua franca, and triggered the coining of radically chaotic crossborder languages that are pervading, transforming, and drastically changing simultaneous interpretation and, to a lesser degree, the work of translators, as the latter are definitely more affected by technological changes brought in by globalization rather than by language mutations.

Pursuing our aim, reference will be made to Latin, a language introduced by the Romans to the rest of the world, used systematically to allow people who do not share a mother tongue to communicate. Latin was a lingua franca that lasted for one and a half millennia. According to Nicholas Ostler⁷ *"just when it was thought that it was on its way out with the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, it got a new lease of life through its association with the Catholic Church"*. Throughout the centuries, Latin has seen many of its words become incorporated into most European languages, be it in their original forms or corrupted versions.

Grounds will be given to support the assertion presented, among which recent examples like the emergence of new 'languages' different from pidgins, creoles and mixed languages, or even code switching or relexification, that are well known in

⁷ Ostler, Nicholas *The Last Lingua Franca English Until the Return of Babel* Published by Walker Bloomsbury, USA, December 1, 2010.

the world of linguistics and may come to be considered dialects in future: *Portunhol*, *Spanglish*, *Guarañol*, *Franglais*, *Taglish*, *Hinglish*, *Quechuañol* and so many others which, in some cases, may be considered 'crossborder languages'. Furthermore, patterns will be used to illustrate how these so called 'crossborder' languages are having a profound effect on simultaneous interpretation and how professionals in this field must adjust to the new paradigm.

Aiming to strengthen our stance, reference will be made to other more adamant reactions against this *bastardization* of a language, such as Law No. 94-665⁸ known by the name of *loi Toubon* enacted by the President of the Republic of France in 1994 to protect the French linguistic heritage.

Our point of view on this important matter is also strongly grounded on the concept of "liquid modernity" developed by Zygmunt Bauman⁹, who suggests there is a rapid changing order that undermines all notions of durability. Among many other critical assertions, in his book he also stated that "*It is difficult to conceive of culture indifferent to eternity and shunning durability. It is similarly difficult to conceive of morality indifferent to the consequences of human actions and shunning responsibility for the effects these consequences may have on others.*"¹⁰

For the purposes of this study, efforts will be made to sketch an analogy between the changes of yesterday, in order to track the footprints of the path followed throughout past centuries to the current world where globalization has acquired yet another facet, a facet that, driven by the indolent nature of man, is raising its tentacles to twist the prevailing, long-established use of languages, with the trivial purpose of inducing changes that, unfortunately, in most cases lead to its mongrelization or bastardization.

⁸ Law No. 94-665 of August 4, 1994 relative to the use of the French language <http://www.dglf.culture.gouv.fr/droit/loi-gb.htm>

⁹ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Liquid Modernity*, Published in 2003 by Polity Press, and Blackwell Publishing Ltd

¹⁰ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Liquid Modernity*, Published in 2003 by Polity Press, and Blackwell Publishing Ltd., page 132

Research Methodology

The methodology used to support the statement upheld by this thesis will consist in developing a timeline of the English language, as a mere example, as many others could also apply. Although the English language is a huge bazaar of words handed down, borrowed or conceived over more than 2000 years, a theory will be developed to show that these changes, alterations, incorporations, loans, blends etc., are quite different to those prompted by the current globalization process.

Additionally, backing the theory developed throughout the text, a definition of language *per se*, as well as data on the development of simultaneous and other interpretation services will be given, in order to illustrate how strongly they were affected by the far-reaching changes spurred by this new globalization trend. Translation will be mentioned to a lesser extent, through an approach slanted to briefly show its link to interpretation.

As an integral part of this thesis, some Annexes have been included to pinpoint germane aspects covered herein. Annex A is used to highlight the relevance of interpretation services, calling attention to the birth of this profession at the Nuremberg Trials, performed in a similar manner to that used today. Annex B on the other hand, following the usual professional acknowledgments extended in other fields of knowledge, renders homage to pioneers that excelled in this profession. Annex C reproduces assorted articles on 'English becoming Lingua Franca at Dutch Universities', and last but not least, Annex D offers a piece of memorabilia that may spur the curiosity of newcomers to this profession to discover much more about it, than the mere data acquired at school.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Bastardization	To lower in quality of character, to debase
Colloquialization	To make colloquial, familiar
Francophone	French-speaking, typically as primary language, whether referring to individuals, groups, or places
Gairaigo	is Japanese for "loan word" or "borrowed word", and indicates a transliteration (or "transvocalization") into Japanese
Interlinguas	An artificial language developed between 1924 and 1951, based mainly on the Romance languages and intended as a medium of international communication among scientists
Interpreters	Interpreters convert the thought or ideas expressed in a source language into an expression with a comparable meaning in a target language in 'real time.'
Language	<i>System of conventional spoken or written symbols used by people in a shared culture to communicate with each other.</i> Encyclopedia Britannica.
Lingua franca	A language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different
Mogrelization	Collins Dictionary: the act or process of making mixed or mongrel breed, race, character, kind, etc.
Monolingualism	Using or knowing only one language
Polyglottization	Acquiring knowledge on several languages

ACRONYMS USED

AIIC	International Association of Conference Interpreters
CCI	Consecutive Conference Interpreting
CI	Conference Interpreting
DGCCRF	<i>Direction Générale de la Concurrence, de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes</i>
DRAE	<i>Diccionario de la Real Academia Española</i> The Royal Academy of the Spanish Language Dictionary
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESIT	Ecole Supérieure d'Interprète et de Traducteurs
ESL	English as a second language
EU	European Union
EVS	Ear-voice span
IM	Instant Messaging
IS	Interpreting Studies
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LTM	Long-term Memory
LT-WM)	long-term working memory
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PACTE	PACTE Group
RAE	<i>Real Academia Española</i>
SL	Source Language
STM	Short-term Memory
TL	Target Language
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNPD	United Nations Poverty and Development Division
VRS	Video Relay Service
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

